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# Has Free Bicycle Scheme Helped Improve Admission to School – A Study of Mysore District



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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p><b>Received:</b> 03-05-2021 <b>Received in revised form:</b> 10-06-2021 <b>Accepted:</b> 14-06-2021 <b>Available online:</b> 30-06-2021</p> <hr/> <p><b>Keywords:</b> Free Bicycle Scheme; Admissions; Dropout; Education Department; Block Education Officers.</p>	<p>The present study attempts to assess the impact of the Free Bicycle Scheme in improving admissions in schools. A total of 500-800 respondents (students, parents, teachers, and officials in the education department) were chosen to complete different sets of questionnaires prepared for the purpose by the author himself in consultation with Block Education Officers (BEO's) from different taluks of the Mysore district. Based on their responses, analysis has been made with regard to the improvement in admissions and reduction in the dropout rate. The study obtained views from teachers, students, parents, and BEO's. However, in this article, only the teachers' view about improvement in admissions is considered. The results revealed that about 91% of them agreed that the scheme has helped improve admissions to the school, 90% agreed that the scheme has an impact on admissions to 8th class and about 78.9% believed that this scheme has an impact on reducing the number of students leaving school halfway'.</p>
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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Free Bicycle Scheme was established to meet the transportation needs of girl students. It sought to improve their school attendance. Later, boys were included as well. In reality, the scheme was established for female students living in rural regions who had difficulty commuting to their schools, causing them to drop out. This year, students in classes 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> in government and aided high schools in the state would have fewer reasons to skip class (Bennur, 2011).

The free bicycle scheme began in 2006-07, intending to facilitate student transportation in rural and hilly areas. Girls studying in 8<sup>th</sup> standard in government and government-aided schools were the target groups. The scheme did not include female students who had a bus pass and a place to stay in a hostel. From 2007-08, the Bicycle Distribution Scheme was expanded to include 8<sup>th</sup> standard girls from low-income households inside the city corporate limits and males (Dinesha, 2018).

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The broad objectives of the program of Free Bicycle Scheme are to,

- To help all eligible children of 7<sup>th</sup> standard as per eligibility criteria to get enrolled to 8<sup>th</sup> standard.
- To help the children to come to school from hilly regions without any problems.
- To improve the enrolment and attendance of children.
- To facilitate the complete transition rate of children from 7<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> standard.
- To arrest the dropouts in high school and to help in completing high school education.

### 1.1 Need for the Study

Towards achieving universal Elementary Education, the Government of Karnataka has initiated many programmes and policies. Supply of free textbooks, uniforms, offering scholarships, and providing free mid-day meals are only a few of the incentive-driven initiatives the government does. These programmes aim to achieve universal enrolment, retention, and excellent education for each child with eight years.

The compulsory and free education to all children is a constitutional mandate and commitment. Hence it becomes obligatory for the State to encourage all incentives to promote Article 45 of the constitution. The state's duty has been further strengthened by the proclamation of the right to education as the fundamental right of all school students of 6 to 14 years.

In this context, the supply of free bicycles to rural girls studying in Government schools has become one of the primary functions of the Education Department. After seeing the difficulties faced by rural girls who travel to school, the government of Karnataka implemented a programme that provided free bicycles to girls in the 8<sup>th</sup> standard from low-income households. This aims to boost girls' confidence and bravery while also lowering dropout rates after the 7<sup>th</sup> standard. The system was implemented beginning with the 2006-07 academic year. Each bicycle costs approximately ₹2,030/-, and this programme has benefitted 1,75,023 qualified girls from 202 school blocks.

Based on the response that was received from Phase-I, the Government of Karnataka extended the scheme to the boys in the 8<sup>th</sup> Standard from low-income households under Phase-II during 2006-07. The number of beneficiaries under this scheme was 2,45,300.

### 1.2 Review of Literature

A detailed review of the literature on the subject matter was carried out. Different types of literature reviews include programme guidelines, research studies, journals, periodicals, annual reports, and other relevant methods. This exercise has helped in the process of formulation of study questionnaires. The reports that have appeared in the newspapers from time to time have further helped the researcher develop insight into the real problems faced in the scheme's implementation. Several such reports have been used to understand the problem before the evaluation of the scheme. The reports on the supply of free bicycles in several newspapers have been presented in chronological order.

"It is difficult to quantify the impact of schemes on student enrolment and retention. In the 1999-2000 academic year, nearly ₹13 lakh students were enrolled in high schools (Class 8-10) in Karnataka. In the subsequent academic year, at least ₹10.53 lakh children, aged between five and 14, dropped out of schools in the State. Cut to 2011-12. The number of students in high schools stood at ₹26.04 lakh. And Karnataka had just 65,000 children, aged between five and 14, who did not go to school that year. The turnaround appears impressive. It indeed is, affirms the State Government. But

what brought this about? The government employed a slew of schemes and incentives to attract students to classrooms. Two of them stand out. The free distribution of bicycles, initially to class 8<sup>th</sup> students and then to class 9<sup>th</sup> pupils, is one of the populist schemes to improve high-school enrolment. The scheme was launched by the then Chief Minister H D Kumaraswamy in 2006. In the first year (2006-07), the government spent ₹85.32 crore distributing 4,20,323 bicycles to poor girl students across the State, except in Bangalore. The next year, ₹4.35 lakh bicycles were distributed at the cost of ₹89.18 crore” (Muthi-ur-Rahman Siddiqui, 2012).

Joshi, (2013) “The Education Department recently commissioned a study to evaluate the utility of its flagship bicycle scheme, in which nearly five lakh class 8<sup>th</sup> students in government and aided schools receive free bicycles at the state’s cost. A third-party study is being carried out to officially identify and evaluate how many students are using bicycles and determine implementation and maintenance issues. The study’s commissioning coincides with the release of the Karnataka: Crafting a New Future report, which summarizes the activities of various state departments from 2008 to 2012. Here, the report states the scheme faces constraints that assembling bicycles takes much time, so distributing them before the academic year is a problem. The report further states a problem in identifying the accurate number of beneficiaries due to variations in admissions, bus pass holders, and students who avail of hostel facility. Students with a bus pass, hostel facility, and students studying in schools in municipal areas are not covered under the scheme. The current line of thinking in the Education Department hints that the scheme has failed to make the desired impact over the years. The original intention of the scheme was to reduce dropout rates and facilitate the completion of high school. The state has spent ₹829.44 crore on this scheme in the last five years. We find that the scheme has lost value for money. The issue of access is limited only to some children in rural and hilly areas. What started as a scheme exclusive for SC/ST children has been extended to all, leading to concerns that the scheme is reaching students who do not require bicycles,” a top official told Express.

Primary and Secondary Education Secretary G Kumar Naik said that incentive schemes suffer from want of exact numbers. They try to finish the tendering process early to ensure bicycles are delivered within a month from the start of the academic year (Joshi, 2013).

### 1.3 Objectives

- To assess the association between taluk and impact of Free Bicycle Scheme on improvement in admissions in general.
- To assess the association between taluk and impact of Free Bicycle Scheme on improvement in admissions to 8<sup>th</sup> class.
- To assess the associations between taluk and the impact of the Free Bicycle Scheme on the decrease in dropouts of students halfway.

### 1.4 Hypothesis

- There is an association between taluk and the impact of the Free Bicycle Scheme on improvement in admissions in general.
- There is an association between taluk and the impact of the Free Bicycle Scheme on improvement in admissions to the 8<sup>th</sup> class.

- There is an association between taluk and the impact of the Free Bicycle Scheme on the decrease in drop out of students halfway.

## 2.0 METHODOLOGY

The researcher first approached the headmasters and teachers of the schools briefed them about the importance of the study and how their responses would help the researcher complete the study. They were given a set of questionnaires consisting of 16 questions, of which some of them were 'yes' 'no' type, some needed multiple answers, and some were on a 5-point Likert's scale. They were further instructed to tick either 'yes' or 'no' for the question of the 'yes' 'no' type, and for those questions which require them to tick multiple answers, they were asked to do so. They were also asked to respond to the question they had to mark on a 5-point scale (strongly agree – strongly disagree). They were also briefed that their responses will be kept confidential, and their responses will only be utilized for the study. They were asked to give their responses freely.

### 2.1 Sample

A total of 261 teachers/headmasters, two each from different schools of each taluk, were chosen to complete the questionnaire prepared for the purpose by the author himself in consultation with Block Education Officers from different taluks of the Mysore district.

### 2.2 Design

The present study went about planning how to prepare the questionnaire through which the respondents' opinion was aimed to be obtained. Several officials of the education department had been approached to obtain information on the fundamental issues relating to the scheme's implementation. Attempts were made to organize workshops in consultation with the DDPI to design the questionnaire.

### 2.3 Scoring

Scoring for the 'yes' 'no' question was 1 for 'yes' and 0 for 'no'. Further, the questions that needed the respondents to give multiple answers; each choice was also treated as 'yes' 'no' type. If a choice was marked/selected, it was considered 'yes', and if a choice was not selected, it was considered 0. The questions requiring the respondents to give their responses on a five-point Likert scale were on a 5-point scale; strongly agree, agree, Neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. For a positive question, the scoring on this scale would be; strongly agree-5, agree-4, Neutral -3, disagree-2, strongly disagree-1.

The responses of each set of questionnaires for teachers were tabulated on an excel sheet. Later it was analysed using SPSS (Version 20), and the results thus obtained were interpreted accordingly.

### 2.4 Statistical Analysis

#### 2.4.1 Contingency Coefficient Analysis

Contingency coefficient analysis was employed to see the association between taluk and the selected demographic variables and responses and respondent groups and their responses.

### 3.0 RESULTS

*Table 1 – Statement showing association between Taluk and Free Bicycle Scheme has helped to Improve the Admissions and Results of Contingency Table Analysis*

(N = 261)

Taluks	The free bicycle scheme has helped improvement in admissions				
	SD	D	N	A	SA
K R Nagar	2 (4.3)	2 (4.3)	0 (0.0)	23 (48.9)	20 (42.6)
T N Pura	0 (0.0)	3 (8.3)	1 (2.8)	20 (55.6)	12 (33.3)
Mysore	0 (0.0)	2 (3.3)	2 (3.3)	32 (52.5)	25 (41.0)
H D Kote	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	3 (13.0)	20 (87.0)	0 (0.0)
Periyapatna	0 (0.0)	3 (6.7)	1 (2.2)	26 (57.8)	15 (33.3)
Nanjangud	1 (2.0)	2 (4.1)	1 (2.0)	29 (59.2)	16 (32.7)
Total	3 (1.1)	12 (4.6)	8 (3.1)	150 (57.5)	88 (33.7)
Test Statistics	CC=.332; p=.039				

**Source:** Primary data / **Note:** Values in the parentheses are percentage to N

The association between taluk and 'the free bicycle scheme has helped to improve the admissions' out of 261 teachers who responded to this question, about 150 (57.5%) said that they agree and about 88 (33.7%) said that they strongly agree, which indicated that the admissions have improved after this scheme was introduced. When the association between taluk and 'Free bicycle scheme has helped to improve the admissions' is verified, Contingency Coefficient (CC=.332; p=.039) revealed a significant association. However, the agreement for the statement was found to be lesser in T N Pura and H D Kote taluks.

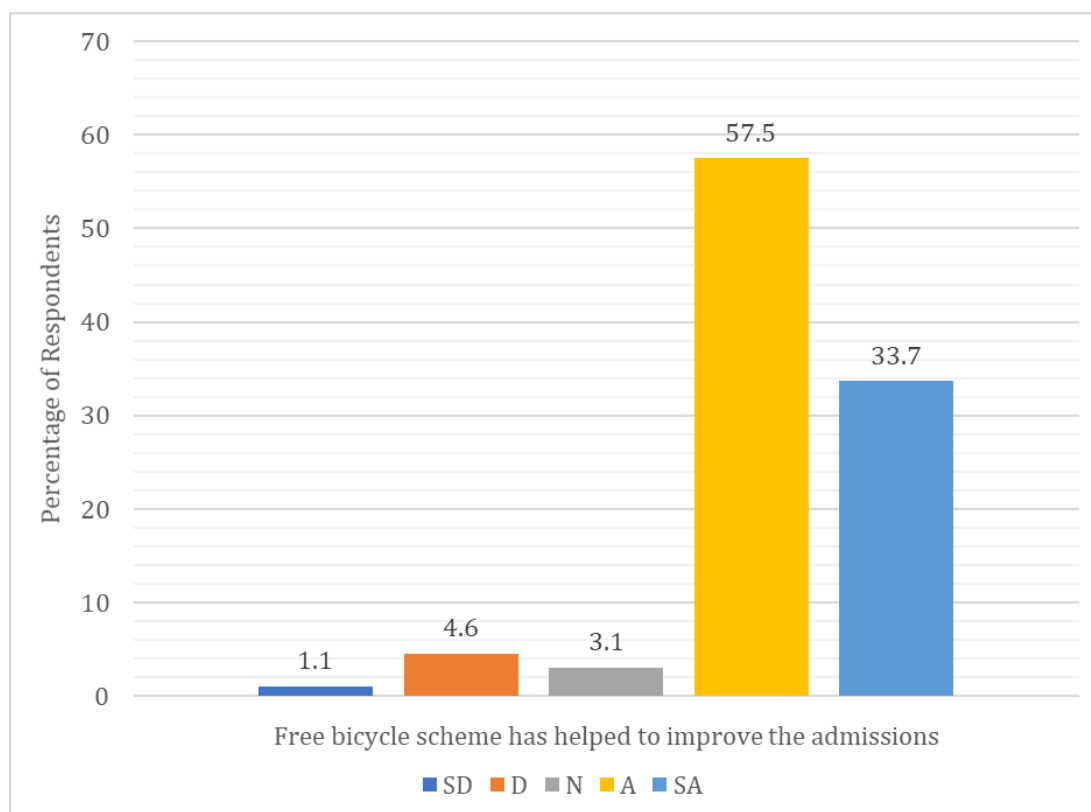
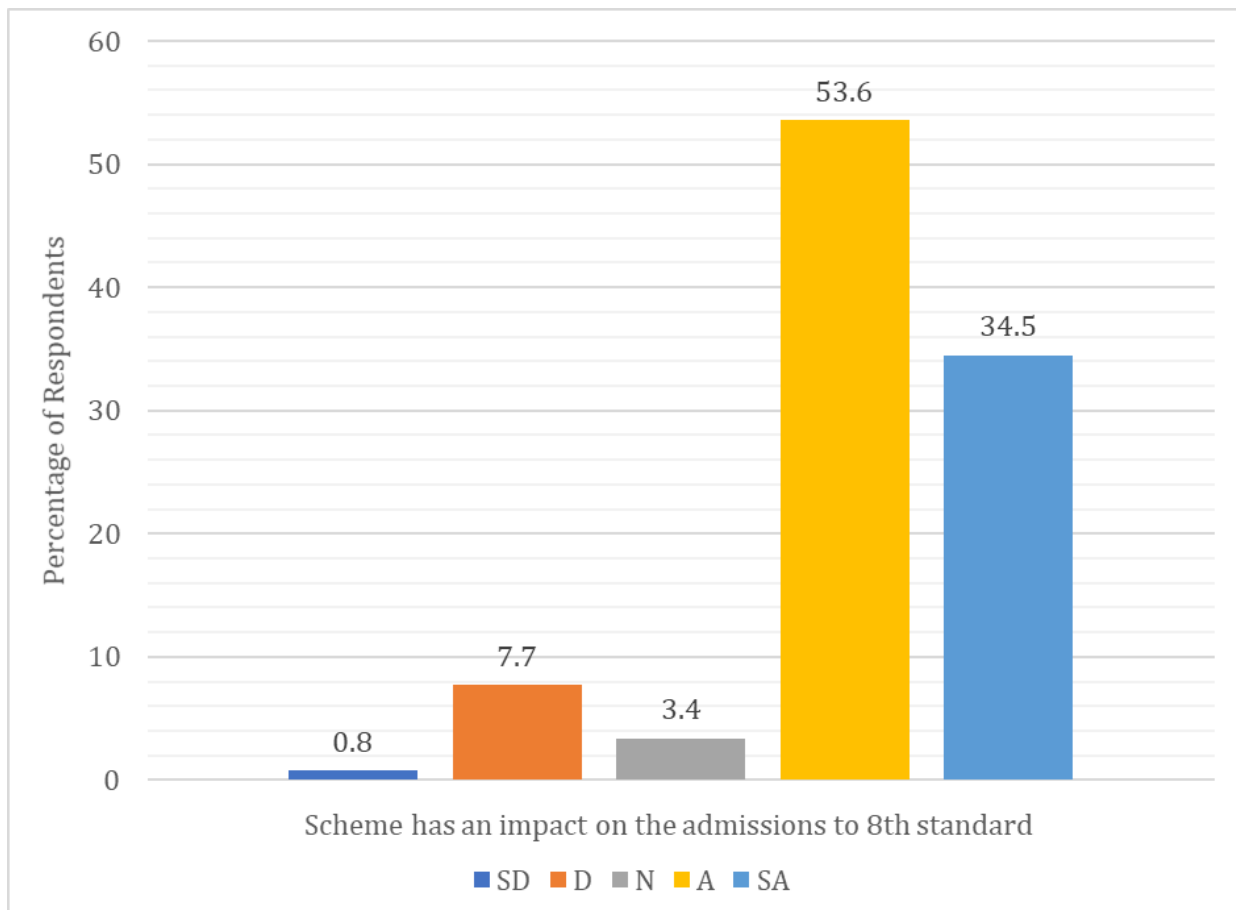


Table 2 – Statement showing association between Taluk and ‘This Scheme has an Impact on the Admissions to 8<sup>th</sup> Standard and Results of Contingency Table Analysis

Taluks	This scheme has an impact on the admissions to 8 <sup>th</sup> standard				
	SD	D	N	A	SA
K R Nagar	1 (2.1)	7 (14.9)	1 (2.1)	23 (48.9)	15 (31.9)
T N Pura	0 (0.0)	2 (5.6)	2 (5.6)	19 (52.8)	13 (36.1)
Mysore	0 (0.0)	4 (6.6)	1 (1.6)	28 (45.9)	28 (45.9)
H D Kote	1 (4.3)	2 (8.7)	1 (4.3)	13 (56.5)	6 (26.1)
Periyapatna	0 (0.0)	4 (8.9)	1 (2.2)	24 (53.3)	16 (35.6)
Nanjangud	0 (0.0)	1 (2.0)	3 (6.1)	33 (67.3)	12 (24.5)
Total	2 (0.8)	20 (7.7)	9 (3.4)	140 (53.6)	90 (34.5)
Test statistics	CC=.277; p=.362				

**Source:** As on Table 1 / **Note:** As on Table 1

On the association between taluk and ‘this scheme has an impact on the admissions to 8<sup>th</sup> standard the Contingency Coefficient (CC=.277; p=.362) revealed a non-significant association indicating a similarity in the view of the respondents. Further, it was observed that about 50 % of the teachers/ headmasters agreed, and 40% strongly agreed that this scheme has an impact on admissions to the 8<sup>th</sup> standard.

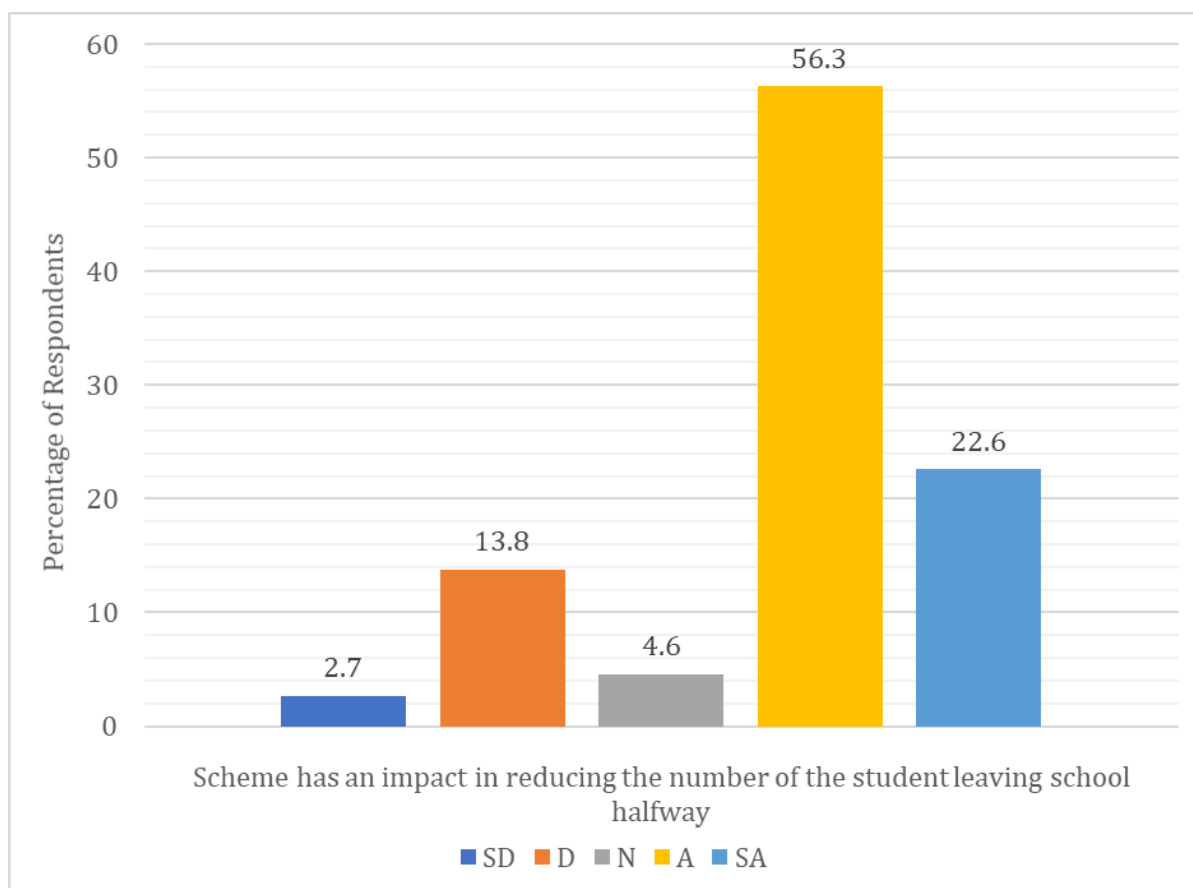


*Table 3 – Statement showing association between Taluk and ‘This Scheme has an Impact in Reducing the Number of the Student Leaving School Halfway’ and Results of Contingency Table Analysis*

Taluks	This scheme has an impact in reducing the number of the student leaving school halfway				
	SD	D	N	A	SA
K R Nagar	1 (2.1)	11 (23.4)	0 (0.0)	28 (59.6)	7 (14.9)
T N Pura	0 (0.0)	1 (2.8)	3 (8.3)	20 (55.6)	12 (33.3)
Mysore	1 (1.6)	4 (6.6)	1 (1.6)	39 (63.9)	16 (26.2)
H D Kote	1 (4.3)	8 (34.8)	2 (8.7)	7 (30.4)	5 (21.7)
Periyapatna	0 (0.0)	8 (17.8)	4 (8.9)	24 (53.3)	9 (20.0)
Nanjangud	4 (8.2)	4 (8.2)	2 (4.1)	29 (59.2)	10 (20.4)
Total	7 (2.7)	36 (13.8)	12 (4.6)	147 (56.3)	59 (22.6)
Test statistics	CC=.365; p=.005				

**Source:** As on Table 1 / **Note:** As on Table 1

The association between taluk and ‘this scheme has an impact in reducing the number of students leaving school half way’ Contingency Coefficient (CC=.365; p=.005) revealed a significant association. Further, out of 261 teachers/ headmasters who responded to this questionnaire, about 147 (56.3%) said they agree, and 59 (22.6%) said they strongly agree. Among all the taluks, those who agreed seemed to be more in number. However, in H.D Kote, the agreement on the statement seemed to be only to the extent of 69.6%.



## 4.0 DISCUSSION

- A significant association was found between taluk and impact of Free Bicycle Scheme on improvement in admissions
- There is no significant association between taluk and impact of Free Bicycle Scheme on improvement in admissions to 8<sup>th</sup> standard
- A significant association was observed between taluk and the impact of the Free Bicycle Scheme on the decrease in dropout of students halfway

### 4.1 Verification of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1 has been accepted as there was a significant association between taluk and impact of Free Bicycle Scheme on improvement in admissions

- The present study further found that though there was a significant association between taluks and impact of Free Bicycle Scheme on improvement in admissions, majority of the teachers (91%) from all taluks opined that “Free bicycle scheme” has made an impact on improvement in admissions however the agreement for the statement was found to be lesser in T N Pura and H D Kote taluks.

Hypothesis 2 has been rejected as no significant association was observed between taluk and the impact of the Free Bicycle Scheme on improvement in admissions to the 8<sup>th</sup> standard.

- There was no significant association between taluk and the impact of the Free Bicycle Scheme on improvement in admissions to the 8<sup>th</sup> standard, indicating a similarity in the respondents' view. However, about 90% of the teachers were in agreement with the statement.

Hypothesis 3 has been accepted as a significant association was observed between taluk and impact of Free Bicycle Scheme on the decrease in dropout of students halfway

- There was a significant association between taluk and the impact of the Free Bicycle Scheme on the reduction in the dropout rate. When the teachers were asked about the reduction in the dropout rate after implementation of the scheme, out of 261 teachers/ headmasters who responded to this questionnaire, about 147 (56.3%) said that they agree and 59 (22.6%) said that they strongly agree to indicate that the scheme has resulted in reducing the dropout rate.
- The reason for the reduction in the dropout rate could be that the children are motivated by the fact that bicycles are provided to them, and the parents are also satisfied with the fact that their children are encouraged and empowered to use bicycles.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION

There were several reviews in newspapers on the successful implementation of the scheme. However, several lacunae were found in the implementation of the scheme; poor quality bicycles, delay in procurement, delay in giving bicycles that extended from 3 months to 6 months and onwards, lack of facilities for repair, lack of parking place, lack of funds for maintenance that has been addressed in the other part of the study. For this current study, whether there had been any improvement in admissions has been considered. About 78% of the teachers agreed that there had been improved after the implementation of the scheme.



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